



PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

3202 NORTH WISCONSIN AVENUE

PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61603

Phone 309 / 672-6512

May 13, 2004

Dr. Sean C. Matheson
2812 N. Linn St.
Peoria, IL 61604

Dear Dr. Matheson,

We find it necessary to write in response to the article that appeared in the Peoria Times Observer on May 12, 2004, which was an exclusive interview with you. We do not know what your intentions were; however, we feel obligated to share with you our understanding of a reality that your article has created. Your statement, "...Williams is not the only person in power at District 150 who should be looking over his or her shoulder." implies that each of us is a potential target. We have experienced this threatening behavior in the past. Now your public statement reinforces your commitment to this practice. Threats of termination take us away from both our mission and the administration of our district as it relates to the education of our children. Are we to believe from your interview that there is collective agreement among the Board members with the views you express?

These comments are consistent with a number of other derogatory comments made and actions that you have previously taken. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Speaking to the media as though you are representing the entire Board or community on the following issues:
 - Impending 'No Vote' on the Superintendent's contract
 - Impending 'No Vote' on a Consultant's contract
 - Peoria Transitional Academy
 - Budget and Finances

2. Attacking the Superintendent as well as the administrative team publicly/privately without any prior discussion for resolution:
 - Physically assaulting the Superintendent
 - Making allegations about the performance of individual staff members and/or consultants using information from undisclosed sources
 - Termination of an administrative staff member without input from the Superintendent

3. Dismissing and challenging the information presented to you at your request and publicly implying that the work is incorrect and immaterial to your deliberations regarding the following:
 - Aramark contract
 - Location for the Peoria Transitional Academy (White Middle School)
 - Attendance, promotion and retention data
 - Misuse of District funds for entertainment, travel and supplies
 - Tentative 02-03 budget
4. Withholding information that had been provided until the open meeting and then proceeding to badger individuals who had no prior knowledge of the issues at hand:
 - Student records - administrators accused of breaking the law
 - Truancy data – administrators accused of misrepresenting truancy data
5. Establishing agreements in closed sessions and then abandoning those agreements, without prior notification, in public sessions:
 - Publicizing White Middle School as a site for the Peoria Transitional Academy
 - Aramark contract
6. Unwilling to accept the recommendations while at the same time being unwilling to problem solve the areas and issues of concern:
 - Principal selection process
 - Refusal to state what the concerns/issues are regarding the performance of the Superintendent and the administrative team
 - Refusal to engage in constructive dialogue and team building to resolve unstated concerns
 - Ignoring offers of support from citizenry and community leaders to engage in team building
7. Refusing to work with the administrative team in the development and implementation of policies and practices which will meet the needs of all children:
 - Appropriate placement of the hearing impaired population
 - Abandonment of the administrative oversight of discipline policies and practices
 - Blatant disregard of high academic expectations for all children

You have indicated that a majority of the Board will vote not to renew the Superintendent's contract in spite of the fact that she has demonstrated tremendous accomplishments by achieving the goals of increasing student achievement and balancing the budget. We fail to understand why schools coming off the watch list and balancing the budget, as significant as they are, do not ensure a renewal of the Superintendent's contract. These comments and actions have been an attack on our professional judgment, integrity and reputations. They have created an uncomfortable and uncertain work environment that deters us from our mission.

All of the aforementioned actions and behaviors have contributed to a formal investigation leading to the present mediations conducted by the United States Department of Justice. It is our position that the mediation hearings be completed in an expeditious manner for the sake of the Peoria community and District 150.

We ask that the comments and actions stop, and that the Superintendent, along with the selected members of her administrative team, be allowed to continue their work. Further, we ask that we begin to work together to establish the rules of engagement for working as a team to benefit all children in District 150.

Sincerely,

Ed Bradle, Director Career/Technical Education

Edward L. Bradle

Audrey Fitzgerald, Academic Consultant

Audrey Fitzgerald

Jerome Greer, Director of Human Resources/Personnel

Jerome Greer

Jacqueline Looser, Director of Employee Services

Jacqueline Looser

Michael McCarten, Director Computer Services

Michael A. McCarten

Linda Millen, Director Student Achievement

Linda Millen

Ira Neal, Director Title I, Grants & Innovation

Ira Neal

Yvonne Payton, Academic Officer

J. Yvonne Payton

Ron Pratt, Treasurer and Controller

Ron Pratt

Sharon Reed, Director of Fine Arts

Sharon S. Reed

Dave Ryon, Director Building and Grounds

David G. Ryon

Cheryl Sanfilip, Academic Officer

Cheryl H. Sanfilip

Thom Simpson, Academic Officer

Thom Simpson

Mike Sullivan, Director Transportation

Michael Sullivan

Cc: Board of Education
Superintendent